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New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Meek
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2015/576)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: As this is the first formal meeting of the Council for the month of August, I should like to take this opportunity to pay special tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Gerard van Bohemen, Permanent Representative of New Zealand, for his service as President of the Council for the month of July. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Van Bohemen and his delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2015/576)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Babacar Gaye, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; and Mr. Abderrazzak Laassel, Deputy Permanent Representative of Morocco and representative of the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/576, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic.

I now give the floor to Mr. Gaye.

Mr. Gaye (*spoke in French*): I should like to express my deep respect to the Council and thank it for its condolences following the demise on 2 August of a Cameroonian peacekeeper from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

The situation in the Central African Republic has, since the previous report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/227), experienced positive developments marked by the progress we have seen in the political process, namely with respect to the Bangui Forum. That political progress, combined with the deployment of MINUSCA in almost 40 locations, has contributed to an improvement in the security situation, which nonetheless remains fragile. This improvement has allowed for the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the resumption of economic activity. These returns took place in locations where MINUSCA is deployed. However, many parts of the territory remain affected by attacks by armed groups. MINUSCA is frequently informed about actions involving harassment, racketeering, arbitrary detention and serious violations of human rights, such as the inhuman treatment inflicted in cases of suspected witchcraft.

In the western part of the country, the recent increase in the number of violent incidents on the main road connecting Bangui to Cameroon is worrisome. Since the month of May, three peacekeepers have been injured in that area, one severely, and, on 18 July, armed men shot at a World Food Programme vehicle that was being escorted by MINUSCA, killing a Cameroonian driver.

The strengthening of MINUSCA's presence through the deployment of force reserve units and actions targeted against the alleged perpetrators of those incidents have made it possible to avert the strikes envisaged by the transportation union. Also in the western sector, I welcome the fact that the efforts of the entire United Nations family in the Central African Republic have led to the release of 91 Fulani Muslims who were being held against their will in villages in the Yaloke region.

In the central sector, intercommunal tensions among ex-Séléka factions and anti-balaka groups in the Bambari and Kaga Bandoro areas continue to pose threats in terms of the protection of the civilian population. The violence has nevertheless decreased in the Bambari sector, where the appeals made by the Head of State of the Transition during her recent visit to that city should contribute to the further return of IDPs in certain areas of the city.

(*spoke in English*)

In the eastern part of the Central African Republic, ex-Séléka continue to have a significant military presence. Although they pose only a minor security threat, MINUSCA is exercising its extension of State authority mandate to end their illegal taxation practices. In addition, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continues to operate in south-eastern Central African Republic, extorting food and other means of survival. MINUSCA is establishing three temporary operating bases in this LRA-affected area to improve its protection-of-civilians effort and further limit the LRA's ability to operate.

Finally, on 15 June, forces of the Central African Republic and the Sudan operating under the tripartite military force arrived unannounced in Birao, an eastern town with a heavy ex-Séléka presence. Thanks to the proactive MINUSCA forces on the ground, an armed clash was averted, notably during the withdrawal of the tripartite military force elements. It is worth noting that the tripartite force does not benefit from an exception under the United Nations sanctions regime for the Central African Republic.

Security is gradually improving in Bangui, where signs of normal life lend a sense of confidence and gradual returns from the airport camp for internally displaced persons to other areas of the city indicate a positive but fragile trend. The anti-Balaka stronghold of Boy-Rabe and the Muslim-dominated PK5 remain hotspots in the capital city. MINUSCA is using a robust approach to restore the rule of law in both areas, as demonstrated by the search-and-arrest operation that took place in PK5 three days ago.

MINUSCA works closely with humanitarian actors through its protection-of-civilians strategy and within the framework of its senior management group (Protection), where military and police deployment locations are regularly adjusted to better protect civilians and support humanitarian action. Despite the positive steps forward, the humanitarian situation remains a significant concern. More than 2.7 million people require assistance, some 450,000 are still refugees, and close to 400,000 citizens of the Central African Republic are displaced inside the country. However, only 30 per cent of the humanitarian appeal has been funded. Against this background, I urge Member States to sustain the positive developments in the country by responding to the humanitarian appeal.

At the political level, the main success of the Bangui Forum — which was remarkably led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa, Mr. Bathily, and the Central Africans authorities — is the spirit of dialogue and inclusivity and the sense that the good of the country eventually prevailed. Against this background, the recent vote of the National Transitional Council to deprive the refugees of their right to vote represents an alarming step backwards and a reminder that more effort should be focused on reconciliation.

On 25 May, the Economic Community of Central African States announced its decision to consider positively an extension of the political transition in the Central African Republic until the end of 2015. Shortly thereafter, the authorities of the Central African Republic announced the electoral calendar: a constitutional referendum on 4 October, the first round of presidential and legislative elections on 18 October, and a second round on 22 November. In the meantime, 478,000 voters have registered, primarily in Bangui, and the process is getting under way in the rest of the country. The restoration of State authority and the electoral process are being buttressed by the deployment of all 16 prefects and 71 sub-prefects, who have benefitted from transport, training and administrative kits provided by MINUSCA and international partners. Although the electoral budget has been reduced by 18 per cent, an $11-million funding gap remains. I call upon international donors to make additional commitments to this critical element of the peace process.

MINUSCA continues to use its urgent temporary measures mandate to arrest spoilers where the State lacks the capacity to do so. In that regard, I also welcome the Transitional Authority's decision to establish the Special Criminal Court to investigate serious crimes committed since 1 January 2003. I call upon donors to support the Court with financial donations and the secondment of international magistrates.

Despite the availability of funds and progress initiating the pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR)of the ex-Séléka in Bangui, we have yet to regroup and disarm the combatants throughout the country. Indeed, most of the signatories would like to respect their commitment under the DDR agreement, but recent political developments have raised doubts, in particular among the ex-Séléka. In the meantime, MINUSCA is working closely with the transitional

authorities to move the process forward in order to establish a situation conducive to calm and transparent elections.

(*spoke in French*)

The Central African Republic is at a crossroads. The next steps will be difficult because they will require leaders to surpass themselves, forgiveness from the people and justice for the benefit of all. I thank the donors that have supported the process, including those that made commitments at the Brussels conference on 26 May. I welcome in particular the contribution by the Peacebuilding Fund $10 million that will be allocated to priorities identified at the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation.

The international community has fulfilled much of its moral obligations to the Central African Republic, including through the deployment of African, French and European forces and, since September, United Nations peacekeepers. Today, the stabilization of the Central African Republic will require a multifaceted support so as to open a new page of the history of that country through free and transparent elections open to all. We have lit the flame of hope: it is our moral responsibility to prevent it from going out.

The President: I thank Mr. Gaye for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Laassel.

Mr. Laassel (*spoke in French*): I would like first to thank congratulate you, Madam, on Nigeria's accession to the presidency of the Council for this month, and to thank you for the invitation extended to Ambassador Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco and Chairman of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. Ambassador Hilale has asked me to convey his regrets for not being able to attend today's briefing. I am honoured to represent him this morning and to express, on behalf of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, the strong commitment of its members to continuing to work closely with the Council.

I also take this opportunity to greet the Special Representative of the Secretary General in the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Mr. Babacar Gaye. I convey the warm regards of Ambassador Omar Hilale, who thanks him once more for his warm welcome to Bangui at his most recent visit. We have followed with interest Mr. Gaye's briefing, which highlights the issues and challenges facing the Central African Republic at a crucial moment for its future and its history.

As is pointed out in the report of the Chairman of the configuration following his visit to Bangui, which has been transmitted to Council members, the current period is critical for the country's future. All interlocutors expressed their desire to move on and are aware of the opportunity that is offered to them through the support of the international community. It is time for the Central African Republic to enjoy its many treasures. It is time to silence the guns forever and yo intensify efforts to build a strong and stable State, with institutions capable of meeting the basic needs of all its citizens.

The Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission welcomes the significant progress that has been made in recent months thanks to the combined efforts of the transitional authorities, MINUSCA and the United Nations Development Programme. Among these improvements, we note the launch of the electoral process and the redeployment of State authority. The organization of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation was also a crucial step in the political transition process. I pay tribute to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa, Mr. Bathily, for his role in the success that event. In that regard, we stress the importance for all active forces of the nation to demonstrate their continued and absolute commitment to resuming the path towards reconciliation and peace, in accordance with the agreements signed at the conclusion of the Forum.

As the country prepares to vote in a constitutional referendum and national elections, all political actors and civil society must ensure that these deadlines are met place in a free and inclusive manner and in a secure environment. All these conditions are sine qua non for the credibility and legitimacy of the process, and so that the State in all its forms can assert its authority to the people.

In that regard, the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission solemnly calls on all Central African political actors to respect the Transitional Charter. Indeed, the country must take this opportunity to move forward and find

solutions to all its afflictions. It is time to set aside differences that tear at the social fabric, and to build the future on a sound basis, characterized by trust and cooperation. The agreements signed at the Bangui Forum, including the Republican pact for peace and the agreement on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation (DDRR), allow us to see more clearly the future and give impetus towards the conclusion of the transitional period.

However, we are all aware that the success of the transition is not an end in itself. We must now start thinking about how to identify ways to support the new authorities so that they can meet the challenges that will following this period. In a country where more than half of the population still depends on international humanitarian aid and where the security situation has been slow to stabilize, it is unfortunately still difficult to have a clear picture of the short term.

Once the transition is complete, the configuration is committed to supporting the new national authorities in the implementation of a peacebuilding strategy for the medium and long terms, in close cooperation with all international partners of the Central African Republic. Prior to that, it is essential that the preliminary steps be completed successfully. As highlighted by the Special Representative of the Secretary General, programmes related to the DDRR phase will require significant funding. Also, no meaningful development can be achieved while the humanitarian and refugee situation remains precarious and underfunded. The support of the international community remains essential to overcome all those challenges.

On his return from Bangui, the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration began an awareness-raising campaign in New York, mainly about the deficit in the budget for the elections. In collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other partners, the configuration held a meeting to raise awareness among the members of the configuration on this matter. The Chair also invited several Member States not members of the configuration, given their interest in the issue. To date, nearly $10 million is still needed to finance the budget for the elections. We hope that new donations will be announced in the coming days to ensure that elections can be held in the required conditions of transparency, inclusiveness and safety.

As we heard earlier, the re-establishment of the judiciary system and the setting up of the Special Criminal Court remain a priority for the country. The problem of impunity has been part of all of the meetings that the Chair of the configuration has held with the representatives of civil society. In that regard, following the participation of the Chair in a meeting with the Minister of Justice organized by the Permanent Mission of the Central African Republic on 27 May, it was decided to establish a reference group on the rule of law and the Special Criminal Court. The group, which is a flexible and informal arrangement, is intended to inform all interested delegations on the progress in strengthening the rule of law and on the preparations for the establishment of the Special Criminal Court.

I take this opportunity to welcome the holding of the eighth meeting of the International Contact Group, which took place on 27 July at Addis Ababa. I also welcome the meeting's conclusions, including on refugee voting and respect for the ineligibility clause.

We would like to pay tribute to the countries and leaders of the region for their commitment and support, especially to His Excellency President Denis Sassou Nguesso, international Nediator for the Central African crisis, as well as to Gabon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad, which are hosting more 400,000 thousands refugees from the Central African Republic. The mobilization of the Economic Community of Central African States has been crucial in ensuring the region's ongoing role, which is essentialto supporting the country. I must also pay tribute to the tireless efforts of Mr. Gaye and his team, who work assiduously for the return of peace and stability in the Central African Republic.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the full readiness of the configuration to continue working closely with MINUSCA, the different parts of the Secretariat, the transitional authorities and all national and international partners of the Central African Republic in order to get the country on the road to peace and stability, for the benefit of all Central Africans.

The President: I thank Mr. Laassel for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.